

Strategic Planning Council Meeting Minutes

June 26, 2014

1:00-2:30 PM

In attendance: Paul Weizer, Jane Fiske, Arnie, Stan Bucholc, Chris Hendry, Rala Diakite, Cathy Daggett, Hank Parkinson, Steve Swartz, Christine Shane, Jannette McMenemy, Cathy Canney, Annette Sullivan, Michael Greenwood, Sean Goodlett, Beth Walsh, Jessica Murdoch, Meg Hoey, Linda LeBlanc, Kisha Tracy, and Jay Bry.

Unable to attend: Nathan Gregoire, Randall Grometstein, and Jamie Roger.

1. * Five minute report from each working group chair indicating
 - a. what they are focusing on at present and why;
 - b. where they expect to be at the end of the summer;
 - c. what additional support would be useful.

*Please see attached reports from each working group chair. Arnie was worried the groups were getting too into detail (“data fatigue”), but he said this didn’t seem to be the case.

2. Identification and discussion of coordination issues are raised by the reports
 - Arnie spoke of a survey for students (Hank mentioned that the Fall term is best to distribute) and how it would be best to coordinate each groups’ questions so students don’t get several different surveys. Steve offered to help with sending out a survey when it’s ready. Arnie made note of the importance of how the questions are worded (as to get the answers we are looking for and not more).
 - Regarding the Community Relations working group, before leaving FSU, Robin Bowen didn’t necessarily share her vision for our strategic plan, and however, she mentioned seeing the campus as having an “incubator relationship with small businesses.”
 - Arnie brought up the debt issue Sean spoke of and will speak with Sean after the meeting. Arnie mentioned a Questions and Answers article in the New York Times regarding student debt.
 - Arnie also reminded the group of the suggested summer readings. Christine asked about their accessibility and Stan as well as Paul offered lending out materials if needed. Arnie also made note of paying attention to national issues and how they are currently portrayed. He said the groups’ questions were deliberately not consistent.

- Arnie let the group know that FSU enrollment is down roughly 6% (roughly 200 students). This results in a decrease of a “couple million in gross revenue.” This decrease in enrollment should result in implementation of cost reductions over 2-6 years. Sean then spoke of elasticity in relation to how much a student is willing to pay for tuition. What is the “price point” where demand will stay high (how are we with relation to costs of each state university?). Paul mentioned this being hard to get a total picture due to so many variables such as housing, meal plans, etc. Sean made note of national studies available that treat elasticity studies and specifically the costs of raising fees.

3. Presentation of big questions for each working group

- Arnie – “What is Strategic Planning”? (Please refer to handouts). With regards to strategic planning “the big picture”, data is in the background. One big question, for instance, is “What kind of institution do we want?” Example being “teaching”, yet, what is the role of research for faculty going forward? Again, this is where Arnie encouraged the committee members to look at the readings. Paul suggested “Checklist for Change” by Robert Zemsky as well as “Lean Six Sigma in Higher Education” (a consumer’s perspective). Michael stated how students are customers and should be treated as such (noting of course that this does not equal giving out A’s).

- Arnie asked the group where they felt they may need support. Sean will have requests for larger amounts of data as the finance and operations groups are data-driven with regard to decision making.

- Paul reiterated reviewing national trends and where is it we (FSU) want to be in five years. What’s going on elsewhere in higher education as the Board of Trustees as well as media is aware of these trends? As Robin said, we need to realize what makes us unique. How can FSU stand out in a shrinking market share?

4. Presentation of strategic planning definitions pulled from the web

- Please refer to handouts

5. Financial impact of next year’s enrollment decline and presentation by Jay on magnitude of the issue that enrollment decline will cause.

- Jay – basically 100 students = (roughly) \$1 million generated. This year FSU budgeted for 150 less students than we had last year (budgeted for 3350 FTE’s as opposed to 3500 last academic year). We will need to dip into reserves (\$3 million) in order to maintain the system we have in place. There is a real possibility that we will not make the 3350 number given our present enrollment which would cause further strain.

Even with the higher enrollment, last year it was also necessary to utilize reserves. Paul noted that this is the second year in a row that fees were not raised. Cathy Canney noted

there is approximately 1200-1500 graduate degree seeking enrolled students at FSU. Sean asked what the headcount limit is. Paul said it is hard to set an absolute limit. However, last fall we had roughly 3800 and we could possibly accommodate 100-200 more than that. However, doing so would be a real challenge. There is not much more room for growth. However, given our current enrollment numbers and the demographic projections for this area, our focus will likely be on getting smaller rather than growth.

6. Quick description of external affairs audit with a PDF made available to the SPC on the website.
 - Michael showed this presentation at the Marketing & Admissions working group's last meeting. There were some interesting comments in a few slides about what students said among themselves, a clue to student's perception in considering coming to FSU. Jessica said the group would make the entire presentation available for the SPC to appreciate. Social media aspect was covered as well as the admission process (how a personal phone call was made from the Admissions office offering acceptance to the university), the benefits of honor students working with incoming honors students, as well as hits on the FSU site has doubled or tripled (a few examples of feedback). One issue was literature and the need to keep mailings consistent with departments.
 - Michael spoke of "brand" and understanding what it is. Is it less efficient to advertise in Boston, for instance (references the "Fair Share Index")?

-Future meetings-

- Jane asked if group Chairs wanted to get together for a meeting in August. The seven group Chairs will meet on August 25th at 10:30 AM (location TBA).
- SPC will meet again on July 24th @ 10:30 AM as well as August 21st @ 2:00 PM (locations TBA)

Minutes by Karen Valeri